



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

June 5, 2023

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director  
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-100  
– FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Senator  
Amoss Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund (State 508) Grant

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-100 – *FY23 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Senator Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund (State 508) Grant* – is unlikely to advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County. Information accompanying this supplemental request provided no evidence of a documented process that considers racial and other disproportionalities in fire and emergency medical risk regarding the distribution and rehabilitation of fire apparatus and capital equipment, and the renovation of facilities used to house apparatus.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-100 – *FY23 Operating Budget, MCFRS Senator Amoss Fire, Rescue and Ambulance Fund (State 508) Grant* – is to fund the acquisition or rehabilitation of apparatus and capital equipment, and the renovation of facilities used to house apparatus, in the amount of \$1,890,475.19. The Amoss Fund was established to provide grants for fire, rescue, and ambulance services that promote high-quality service and the continued financial viability of volunteer fire, rescue, and ambulance companies. For the purposes of this supplemental request, the specific use of funds will represent priorities established by the County Executive and Fire Chief in coordination with the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association. The collaborative nature of this partnership is ideal as it offers an opportunity to incorporate a

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racial equity lens to resource distribution as the County Executive’s vision statement<sup>1</sup> emphasizes an equitable and more inclusive County.

III. **APPLICATION OF A RACE EQUITY ANALYSIS:** In order to assess the extent to which a supplemental request such as this advances racial equity and social justice in the County, ORESJ would examine whether services and resources provided under this appropriation are equitably distributed and/or address a racial disparity. For the purposes of this supplemental request, information regarding beneficiaries of MCFRS service delivery was not available for such an analysis. Information accompanying this request also did not identify equitable access to MCFRS resources as a priority, but instead states that “The Department strives to provide a fire and rescue operation in which all residents benefit equally from having an appropriate number of trained and equipped personnel available to respond to fire, rescue, and emergency medical incidents”. ORESJ would assert that due to historical and systemic factors, not all County residents are equally situated which would result in disproportionate outcomes should equal distribution of a benefit be deployed. As such, the application of a racial equity lens regarding resource distribution is needed in order to mitigate the undue burden on communities that are at the greatest risk of experiencing harm.

[REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #23-57 – Amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program for Apparatus Replacement Program](#) – suggests’ the use of a “Targeted Universalist” approach in which universal goals are established for all groups concerned, however, the strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based on how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal.<sup>2</sup> This approach may be useful to MCFRS when addressing resource distribution as there continues to be a conflation between equality and equity. While equality aims to ensure everyone has equal access to resources, equity recognizes that in certain circumstances, different treatment may be required to achieve fairness and justice.<sup>3</sup> The commonly referenced visual below illustrates this concept.

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Government. *Vision: A More Equitable and Inclusive Montgomery County*. 2023.

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/government/visionStatement.html>

<sup>2</sup> powell, j., Menendian, S. & Ake, W. *Targeted Universalism Policy & Practice*. 2019. Available at:

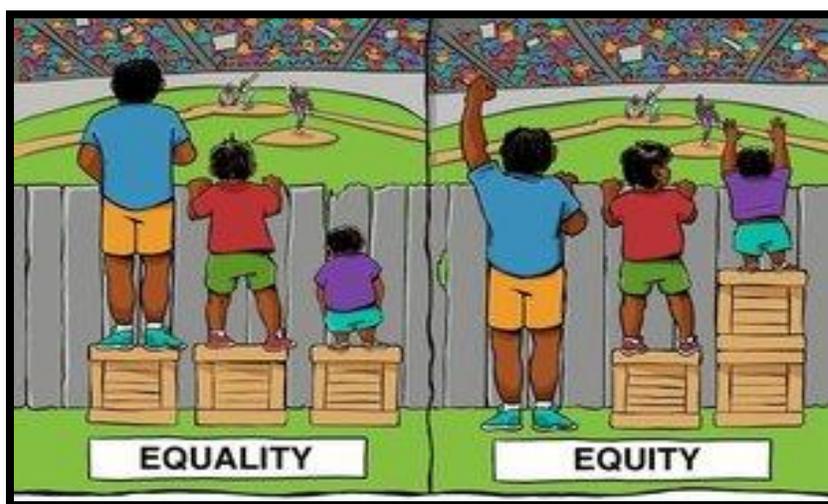
<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeted-universalism>

<sup>3</sup> Menendian, S. *Equity vs. Equality: What's the Difference?* 2023. [https://belonging.berkeley.edu/equity-vs-equality-whats-](https://belonging.berkeley.edu/equity-vs-equality-whats-difference#:~:text=To%20summarize%3A%20Equality%20means%20that,provide%20meaningful%20equality%20of%20opportunity)

[difference#:~:text=To%20summarize%3A%20Equality%20means%20that,provide%20meaningful%20equality%20of%20opportunity](https://belonging.berkeley.edu/equity-vs-equality-whats-difference#:~:text=To%20summarize%3A%20Equality%20means%20that,provide%20meaningful%20equality%20of%20opportunity).

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\* Image Credit: Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

<https://interactioninstitute.org/> and <http://madewithangus.com/>

The utilization of a “Targeted Universalist” approach would allow MCFRS to set broad goals regarding community safety while also enabling them to consider areas of greatest need in the County – such as communities at greatest fire or emergency medical risk and communities that experience longer FRS and EMS response times – to assess whether their current approach to resource allocation and distribution advances equitable outcomes in the County or exacerbates inequities. Again, while MCFRS may not necessarily be positioned to address the root causes of such inequities, it can plan for and distribute assistance in ways that help to reduce negative outcomes resulting from those inequities.

The REIA for supplemental appropriation #23-57 also stresses the importance of the use of data in addition to providing transparency regarding the full methodology of policies or processes used to determine resource distribution. Both data and transparency offer an opportunity to identify areas of greatest need as well as develop strategies to ensure those with high levels of need are prioritized. These points also contribute to the application of a “Targeted Universalist” approach.

For additional reference, ORESJ has previously documented the importance of utilizing a racial equity lens regarding resource distribution as a way to address racial and other inequities shaping fire safety risk (and other emergency health outcomes) in the County. Our analysis can be found in the following Racial Equity Impact Assessments (REIAs):

1. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-69 Senator Amoss Fire and Rescue Services Grant

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-69.pdf>

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2. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation # #22-87 Heart Monitor/Defibrillator Replacement  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-87.pdf>
3. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #22-90 FY22 Operating Budget of MCFRS for  
ESPP  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-90.pdf>
4. REIA of Supplemental Appropriation #23-08 FY23 Montgomery County Fire and  
Rescue Service, Emergency Service Transporter Supplemental Payment Program  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-08.pdf>

cc: Charles Bailey, Interim Fire Chief, Fire and Rescue Services  
Ken Hartman, Director, Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive